



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

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27 Sep 02

Dear Colleagues:

I pray this letter to the Corps finds you well and enjoying your service to God and Country. The article below was written for publication in the quarterly National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) newsletter. I send it to you knowing that many with whom we serve need an anchor for their souls. It is our privilege to point them to the One who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!

ADAPTING TO RAPID CHANGE

Prominently displayed at the Naval Chaplains School, are the prophetic words of the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus. "Nothing is Permanent But Change." Best known for his epigrammatic musings, Heraclitus correctly asserted that the rivers of change flow without end. Twenty five hundred years since he wrote, humanity continues to face accelerating change.

Americans have been shaken by the events of 9/11/01 and the myriad changes this tragedy brought to our Nation. Stock values plummeted, drying up once bountiful retirement accounts. Seemingly invincible Fortune 500 corporations filed for bankruptcy. Our Nation's focus shifted toward homeland defense and the prevention of additional attacks. Many Americans expressed fear of an unknown future. Counselors helped increasing numbers of clients seeking relief. Our leaders openly speculated about the inevitability of war. These changing times can test our resolve.

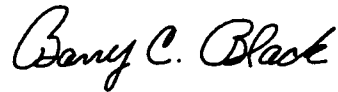
When faced with swirling change, to whom can we turn to find an anchor for our souls? What message can we offer to those we serve as they ponder the uncertainties ahead? God's Word can bring us hope and peace in changing times. To meet the challenge of rapid change we need to seek the changeless One. God alone can strengthen us and equip us for whatever is ahead.

The Psalmist said, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." (46:1-3) For people of faith, the future is secure-we will live with God forever. We know who and whose we are, and we know where we will spend eternity. Until then, God's eternal word and sustaining presence equip us to face whatever personal or societal changes may occur.

Heraclitus said, "Nothing is permanent but change." Believers know that in rapidly changing times many seek God and find a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many a foe. They discover a fortitude that refuses to tremble on the brink of earthly woes. God alone is our refuge and strength. This is the message military chaplains and civilian clergy are called to share now and in the changing times to come.

May you experience peace that passes all understanding and know the love of God in abundance in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps
U. S. Navy
Chief of Navy Chaplains